

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T STATE 058118

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT AMMAN 2116 ACTION SECSTATE INFO CAIRO,
JERUSALEM, JIDDA AND TEL AVIV MAR 05.

QUOTE: S E C R E T AMMAN 2116

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

U.S. DEL. NO. 58

E.O.11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, PEPR, JO, US, XF

SUBJECT: ATHERTON-SHARAF MEETING

SUMMARY: ATHERTON HELD TWO-HOUR CONVERSATION WITH
COURT CHIEF SHARAF. HE WENT OVER IN DETAIL THE
PRINCIPAL AREAS OF DIFFERENCE AMONG THE ISRAELI, FEBRUARY 27,
U.S. JANUARY 20, AND EGYPTIAN FEBRUARY 23 LANGUAGE FOR A DECLARATION
OF PRINCIPLES. ATHERTON EMPHASIZED THAT IF PALESTINIAN
LANGUAGE COULD BE AGREED THE OTHER POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

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WERE BRIDGEABLE. ATHERTON ALSO POINTED OUT THE BEGIN
POSITION ON 242'S NON-APPLICATION TO WITHDRAWALS ON ALL
FRONTS AND NOTED THAT THERE WAS STRONG U.S. DISAGREE-
MENT WITH THIS NEW INTERPRETATION. SHARAF SAID HE
PREFERRED THE EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE.
ATHERTON INDICATED THAT HE HAD MADE CLEAR TO BOTH
SIDES THE ASWAN FORMULA WAS THE MOST LIKELY COMPROMISE

AND THE EGYPTIANS, HE BELIEVED, WOULD ACCEPT THIS. ATHERTON TOLD SHARAF THAT THE QUESTIONS OF WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS AND PALESTINIAN LANGUAGE IN THE DECLARATION WOULD BE HIGH ON THE AGENDA OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN. BUT THE ARABS SHOULD NOT EXPECT INSTANT CHANGES FROM THE ISRAELIS AS BEGIN WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT HIS COLLEAGUES AND HIS CABINET. THERE WAS GROWING INTERNAL CRITICISM OF BEGIN POSITION, PARTICULARLY ON THE NEED FOR ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS. SHARAF MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR FULL ASSURANCES FOR JORDAN ABOUT THE END RESULT OF NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE IT COULD JOIN THE PROCESS. HE ALSO EXPLORED A PERSONAL IDEA THAT A CHANGE IN VENUE AND FORMAT WOULD HELP JORDAN, THE PALESTINIANS, AND SYRIA TO COME INTO THE PROCESS. IT HAD TO BE DELINKED FROM THE SADAT INITIATIVES. ATHERTON LISTENED AND AGREED ONLY TO EXAMINE THE SUGGESTION. ATHERTON ENCOURAGED THE BEGINNING OF A U.S.-JORDANIAN DIALOGUE ON A WEST BANK/GAZA INTERIM REGIME AND ON WHAT SORT OF ASSURANCES WERE REALLY REQUIRED FOR JORDAN TO JOIN NEGOTIATIONS. JORDAN'S DEMAND FOR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL AND UNLIMITED SELF-DETERMINATION WAS UNREALISTIC. WHAT DID JORDAN REALLY THINK WAS REQUIRED? SHARAF AVOIDED ANY CLEARCUT ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION, BUT DID INDICATE THAT JORDAN LOOKED FORWARD TO A CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH US OVER THESE ISSUES. ENDSUMMARY.

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1. ATHERTON AND PICKERING MET WITH SHARAF MORNING MARCH 4 FOR NEARLY TWO HOURS TO DISCUSS PRESENT STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS, JORDANIAN POSITION, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

2. SHARAF AGREED TO SEE ATHERTON PRIOR TO HIS CALL ON KING TO GO OVER IN ADVANCE SOME OF THE GROUND WITH PARTICULAR EMPHAIS ON WHERE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES NOW STAND. AFTER AN INITIAL GENERAL EXCHANGE, ATHERTON BEGAN BY EXPLAINING IN DETAIL, WITH THE HELP OF COMPARATIVE DRAFTS WHICH SHARAF READ BUT DID NOT KEEP, THE PRESENT STATE OF PROGRESS.

3. COMMENCING WITH DECLARATION PARA 1, ATHERTON MADE CLEAR THAT BOTH SIDES ACCEPTED THE U.S. WORDING OF THIS ESSENTIALLY GENERAL COMMITMENT TO A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT.

4. PARA 2 OF THE DECLARATION CONTAINED A NUMBER OF DIFFERENCES. THE EGYPTIANS TALKED ABOUT THE

"IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSC 242" WHILE THE ISRAELIS USED A FORMULATION "ON THE BASIS OF ALL THE PRINCIPLES". ATHERTON POINTED OUT THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD ACCEPTED THE ADDITION OF THE WORD "ALL" TO DESCRIBE THE PRINCIPLES. ANOTHER DISPUTED POINT WAS THE EFFORT ON THE EGYPTIAN SIDE TO INCLUDE SOME REFERENCE TO PREAMBULAR LANGUAGE WHEN IT SPOKE ABOUT ALL THE PARTS OF RES 242 AND PARTICULARLY TO THE INADMISSIBILITY OF THE ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY THROUGH WAR. IN THE LONG RUN ATHERTON POINTED OUT, AND SHARAF SEEMED TO ACCEPT, THE STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT THE U.S. LANGUAGE WOULD PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES.

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5. THEN ATHERTON WENT ON TO POINT OUT THE DIFFERENCES OVER THE WITHDRAWAL LANGUAGE. THE ISRAELI LANGUAGE WAS BROAD ENOUGH TO SUBSUME ALL OF RESOLUTION 242. THE EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE, HOWEVER, CONTAINS A SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO PRINCIPLE OF THE INADMISSIBILITY OF THE ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY WAR. SHARAF MADE CLEAR THAT JORDAN WOULD FAVOR THE EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE. I EXPLAINED PROBLEMS ISRAELIS HAVE WITH THIS AND WHY WE THINK THEY HAVE A POINT.

6. THE DISCUSSION THEN TURNED TO THE PALESTINIAN LANGUAGE WHICH ATHERTON MADE CLEAR WAS AT THE HEART OF THE BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOTH SIDES. IF THE PALESTINIAN LANGUAGE COULD BE RESOLVED, THEN IT WAS PROBABLE THAT THE OTHER WORDING DIFFERENCES ALSO COULD BE WORKED OUT. IN ADDITION, BOTH SIDES HAD BEEN TOLD QUITE CLEARLY THAT THE ASWAN LANGUAGE WAS THE ONLY LIKELY COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE DIFFERENCES REFLECTED BY BOTH SIDES. ATHERTON NOTED THAT THE ASWAN LANGUAGE WAS INCLUDED IN THE U.S. DRAFT LINKED TO PROPOSED WORDING FROM THE EGYPTIAN DRAFT WHICH FOCUSED ON THE TALKS IN WHICH EGYPT, JORDAN, ISRAEL, AND THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WOULD PARTICIPATE. ALSO THE EGYPTIAN DRAFT WAS STRONGER USING THE WORDING THAT PALESTINIANS SHOULD "DETERMINE" RATHER THAN "PARTICIPATE IN DETERMINING" THEIR FUTURE. THE ISRAELIS HAVE DIVIDED THEIR DRAFT ON PALESTINIAN/WEST BANK/GAZA ISSUES INTO TWO PARTS AND ARE INSISTING ON USING "JUDEA, SAMARIA AND THE GAZA DISTRICT". HOWEVER, DAYAN HAD INDICATED THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE THE FINAL, OFFICIAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE VERSION USE THE TERMS "WEST BANK AND GAZA" WHILE THE HEBREW PRESS REFERRED TO "JUDEA AND SAMARIA." AGAIN SHARAF MADE IT CLEAR THAT JORDAN WOULD

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FAVOR THE EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE.

7. HREGARDING PARA. 6, ATHERTON POINTED OUT THAT ISRAEL HAD ACCEPTED THE U.S. WORDING AND THAT WHILE THE EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE DID NOT INCLUDE REFERENCE TO PEACE TREATIES, THIS POINT TOO MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE OVERCOME. EGYPT HAD COME A LONG WAY IN THIS DIRECTION. SHARAF AGREED AND POINTED OUT THAT ASAD HIMSELF HAD ACCEPTED REFERENCE TO PEACE TREATIES AND DID NOT QUIBBLE OVER A DISTINCTION BETWEEN TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS.

8. ATHERTON THEN MOVED ON TO EXPLAIN THAT WITH REGARD TO WITHDRAWAL THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED A NEW POSITION THAT RES 242 DID NOT REQUIRE WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS. THE EGYPTIANS TALKED ABOUT WEST BANK TOTAL WITHDRAWAL BUT ACCEPTED THE NOTION OF MINOR BORDER RECTIFICATIONS TO BE NEGOTIATED. OUR JUDGMENT WAS THAT WITHDRAWAL SHOULD TAKE PLACE ON ALL FRONTS AND THAT 242 DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATING BORDER ADJUSTMENTS. SHARAF POINTED OUT THAT THE ARABS WERE NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT A UNILATERAL ISRAELI VETO ON WITHDRAWAL BUT THAT ADJUSTMENTS COULD BE NEGOTIATED AND AGREED.

9. ATHERTON THEN POINTED OUT THAT THE TWO MAJOR AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT--WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS AND THE ASWAN LANGUAGE AS APPLIED TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM--WOULD FIGURE HIGH ON THE AGENDA OF THE PRESIDENT'S TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN ON HIS COMING VISIT TO THE U.S. IN THESE TWO CASES WE FIND OURSELVES VERY SHARPLY AT VARIANCE WITH THE ISRAELIS. CLEARLY BEGIN COULD NOT MAKE A UNILATERAL ADJUSTMENT OF THE ISRAELI POSITION ON THE SPOT. BUT AS A RESULT OF HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT, WE HOPED HE WOULD GO BACK TO THE CABINET AND BEGIN A PROCESS OF SEEKING ADJUSTMENTS AND CHANGES IN ORDER

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TO MAKE A DECLARATION POSSIBLE.

10. ATHERTON NOTED THAT WITHIN ISRAEL THERE WAS NOT UNIVERSAL SUPPORT FOR BEGIN'S NEW POSITION. JUST A FEW DAYS AGO THE JERUSALEM POST CONTAINED A WHOLE SERIES OF CRITICAL ARTICLES. ABBA EBAN HAD WRITTEN OF ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE OF THE APPLICATION OF 242 AT ALL FRONTS.

IT WAS A DIVISIVE ISSUE AND ONE CAUSING COMMENT AND CRITICISM IN ISRAEL AND AS SUCH WAS REFLECTIVE OF A GROWING PROCESS OF RE-EXAMINATION AND CHANGE. ATHERTON CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT IF WE COULD RESOLVE THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN LANGUAGE, WE BELIEVED THE OTHER DIFFERENCES WERE BRIDGEABLE. THE NEW DECLARATION WOULD REPRESENT A DECIDED ADVANCE BY FILLING IN THE GAP IN RESOLUTION 242 IN ITS COVERAGE OF THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. SHARAF COMMENTED THAT HE THOUGHT THE OVERALL EXERCISE WORTHWHILE IF IT FORCED THE PARTIES TO RE-EXAMINE THEIR SPECIFIC THINKING. HE ASKED IF WE HAD GIVEN OUT THE VARIOUS PROPOSED DRAFTS AND ATHERTON MADE CLEAR THAT THE U.S. DOCUMENT WAS MERELY A WORKING DRAFT OF SUGGESTIONS TO BOTH SIDES. HE AGREED IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION TO PROVIDE SHARAF A COPY OF THE U.S. WORKING PROPOSAL, A COPY OF WHICH HAD BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO CROWN PRINCE HASSAN IN WASHINGTON. SHARAF ALSO COMMENTED THAT ON THE WITHDRAWAL LANGUAGE WE DID NOT SEEM TO HAVE MOVED BEYOND 242.

11. IN RESPONSE ATHERTON REPLIED THAT THERE WERE TWO REASONS FOR THIS: A) IN OUR VIEW 242 DOES NOT PRECLUDE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MODIFICATION OF 1967 LINES AND THEREFORE STATEMENT ABOUT TOTAL WITHDRAWAL
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WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE; AND B) ISRAEL IS NOT GOING TO MAKE WITHDRAWAL DECISIONS IN THE ABSTRACT BUT ONLY IN CONTEXT OF SPECIFIC NEGOTIATIONS IN RETURN FOR PEACE AND SECURITY. FOR THE EGYPTIANS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PRINCIPLE OF TOTAL WITHDRAWAL HAS ALREADY BEEN GRANTED IN THE SINAI BY BEGIN, IN RESPONSE TO SADAT'S PEACE OFFER. TRUE THERE ARE CONTINUING PROBLEMS OVER THE SINAI SETTLEMENTS AND THE AIR BASES BUT EGYPT HAS ACHIEVED ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE BY BEGIN.

12. SHARAF WONDERED, IN THE LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT WHILE A DECLARATION MIGHT BE GOOD AND USEFUL IT WAS MERELY AN AGREEMENT ON PAPER AND AT THAT AN ABSTRACT AND AMBIGUOUS ONE, WHERE WE WOULD SEE THE PROCESS GOING NEXT. THE DECLARATION WOULD NOT SOLVE THE BASIC POLITICAL PROBLEM. HOW WAS IT LIKELY THAT WE COULD MOVE AHEAD? IN RESPONSE ATHERTON POINTED OUT THAT IF YOU GET THE ASWAN LANGUAGE AND ISRAELI AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO WITHDRAW ON ALL FRONTS IT CAN FORM A NEW BASIS FOR PROGRESS. THE PRINCIPLES WERE NOT AN END POINT. WE HOPED WITH SUCH A STEP FORWARD TO BROADEN THE NEGOTIATIONS. BUT WE COULD NOT OF COURSE

GET AGREEMENT BY THE ISRAELIS ON FINAL ARRANGEMENTS IN THE ABSENCE OF CONCRETE NEGOTIATIONS AMONG THE PARTIES. IT'S NOT REALISTIC TO EXPECT THE FINAL ANSWER TO BE WORKED OUT IN ADVANCE.

13. ATHERTON WENT ON TO INDICATE WE WERE THINKING OF AN INTERIM OR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD FOR THE WEST BANK/GAZA BEFORE A FINAL PEACE TREATY COULD BE AGREED AND IMPLEMENTED. SUCH WOULD PROVIDE TIME TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. WE KNEW THE BEGIN PLAN WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE ARABS. BUT IF YOU COULD GET THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL, THEN IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO PROCEED WITH NEGOTIATIONS, INCLUDING LINKS BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE WEST BANK. THIS PART OF THE PROCESS COULD HELP TO ASSURE ISRAEL THAT THE
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SOLUTION TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA COULD ASSURE THEIR SECURITY WITHOUT REQUIRING PERMANENT ISRAELI CONTROL. IT WOULD BE A DYNAMIC PROCESS, A PERIOD OF CHANGE AND A PERIOD IN WHICH TO TALK ABOUT THE ACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS INCLUDING BORDER ADJUSTMENTS. WE HAD ASKED THE EGYPTIANS FOR THEIR IDEAS WHICH MIGHT COMPLEMENT THE BEGIN PLAN. THEY HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO PROVIDE IDEAS INDICATING THEY HAD NO MANDATE ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. THEY SAID THAT THEY WOULD BE APPROACHING JORDAN FOR ITS IDEAS. SHARAF CONFIRMED THEIR AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO HAD BEEN ASKED TO PROVIDE JORDAN'S THOUGHTS. ATHERTON SAID WE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO BEGIN A CONFIDENTIAL DIALOGUE WITH JORDAN TO EXPLORE ITS IDEAS. THIS COULD BE ON WHATEVER BASIS JORDAN DESIRED. IN ADDITION WE HAD SOME IDEAS OF OUR OWN AND WE KNEW THE EGYPTIANS WERE VERY ANXIOUS TO HAVE JORDAN'S RESPONSE. WE WERE IMPRESSED BY EGYPT'S DESIRE TO HAVE JORDAN AND SOME PALESTINIANS JOIN IN THE PROCESS. FRANKLY WE KNEW THAT JORDAN WAS CONCERNED AND SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A SEPARATE EGYPTIAN PEACE. SINCE WE FELT THE EGYPTIANS COULD HAVE MOVED ON THAT VERY QUICKLY, WE WERE IMPRESSED BY THEIR DESIRE TO KEEP MOVING ON A COMPREHENSIVE FRONT. THERE SEEMED TO BE A REAL SENSE OF OBLIGATION AMONG THE EGYPTIANS TO A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE THAT MIGHT EVEN INCLUDE THE SYRIANS AT SOME POINT.

14. SHARAF CONFIRMED THAT JORDAN WOULD BE INTERESTED IN TALKING FURTHER ABOUT SUCH POINTS.

15. SHARAF THEN EXPLAINED THE JORDANIAN POSITION. HE FELT IMPROVEMENTS OVER 242 WOULD HELP, BUT JORDAN RISKED A GREAT DEAL ENTERING NEGOTIATIONS
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AND WISHED TO BE ASSURED OF THE RESULTS. IT HAD NOT BEEN EASY FOR JORDAN TO SUPPORT 242 IN 1967, BUT ITS HOPES THEN HAD NOT BEEN FULFILLED.

QUITE FRANKLY THE PEACE PROCESS HAD LOST CREDIBILITY OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS AND THIS FACTOR HAD TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. JORDAN WAS BEING ASKED TO JOIN IN DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BUT THERE WAS NO ASSURANCE POSSIBLE OVER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNDERSTANDINGS WHICH JORDAN HAD RECEIVED IN 1967 WHICH HAD BEEN CLEAR AND SPECIFIC. NOW BEGIN HAD RETREATED ON

THE APPLICATION OF WITHDRAWAL TO ALL FRONTS. JORDAN HAD NO CLAIM OVER GAZA AND ITS CLAIM TO THE WEST BANK AFTER RABAT WAS IN DOUBT. JORDAN IS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES TO NEGOTIATE AND THE ISRAELIS WERE RETROGRESSING ON THEIR OWN POSITION. THE PRESENT PROCESS DOES NOT ADDRESS JORDAN'S CONCERNS AND DOES NOT PROVIDE ASSURANCES ABOUT THE RESULTS. SHARAF EMPHASIZED THAT HE COULD NOT SPEAK FOR THE GOVERNMENT BUT WAS REACTING UNOFFICIALLY. HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE CONVINCED THAT JORDAN WOULD NOT BE BOGGED DOWN IN AN ENDLESS PROCESS WHICH WOULD FINISH IN STALEMATE OR WITH THE LOSS OF HALF OF THE WEST BANK. JORDAN STILL HAD TO INSIST ON A POSITION OF TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION AND TO HAVE PALESTINIANS NEGOTIATING ALONGSIDE IT.

16. SHARAF THEN SAID HE WANTED TO ADD A PERSONAL THOUGHT. HE WONDERED, IN THE CONTEXT OF GETTING JORDAN AND OTHERS TO JOIN IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS INCLUDING POSSIBLY SYRIA, WHETHER WE HAD CONSIDERED THE IDEA OF A CHANGE OF VENUE AND FRAMEWORK FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS. IT WOULD BE CHANCE FOR THE OTHERS TO SEE A NEW PROCESS BEGIN NOT DIRECTLY STEMMING

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FROM THE SADAT INITIATIVE. SHARAF FELT WE COULD INCORPORATE ALL OF THE PROGRESS MADE AS A RESULT OF THE SADAT INITIATIVE WITHOUT BEING BOUND TO CALL UNDUE ATTENTION TO IT.

17. ATHERTON IN REPLY SAID WE HAD NOT CONSIDERED IN PRECISE TERMS SUCH A POSSIBILITY. HOWEVER OUR

CONCEPT IS THAT THE SADAT INITIATIVE IS ONLY A WAY STATION TO A BROADER EVENTUAL AGREEMENT. AS WE MOVED AHEAD WE COULD REALISTICALLY EXAMINE WHAT WE HAD ACHIEVED AND WHERE WE SHOULD GO NEXT. WE WOULD WANT TO THINK ABOUT SHARAF'S SUGGESTION. SHARAF IN TURN PUT HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS WHICH SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS UNDER SOVIET INFLUENCE ATTACHED TO THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. THE SOVIETS STILL TALK TO JORDAN ABOUT WANTING TO RESTART AT GENEVA. SHARAF ALSO EMPHASIZED IT WOULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PRESIDENT CARTER TO RENEW THE PEACE PROCESS WITH THE OTHER ARAB STATES. THE SADAT PROGRESS SHOULD NOT BE ABANDONED, BUT ONLY SOFT-PEDALED. SHARAF SAID IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION THAT THE SYRIANS WOULD PROBABLY NOT AGREE TO ANY DECLARATION WHICH EMERGED AS A RESULT OF THE SADAT INITIATIVES, ALTHOUGH HE AGREED THAT IN ANOTHER CONTEXT SYRIA MIGHT NOT HAVE OBJECTIONS TO THE WORDING OF THE U.S. PROPOSED PAPER.

18. SHARAF THEN COMMENTED THAT U.K. PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN WAS WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AFTER THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, PARTICULARLY IF U.S. AND ISRAEL REMAINED VERY FAR APART ON THE KEY ISSUES. HE EMPHASIZED COMING BACK TO THE IDEA
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OF A CHANGE OF VENUE THAT THE U.S. SHOULD THINK ABOUT A NEW INITIATIVE ON OUR OWN, PERHAPS ON THE BASIS OF A PURELY PROCEDURAL PAPER IN A WAY THAT DID NOT OFFEND PRESIDENT SADAT.

19. ATHERTON MADE CLEAR THAT WE EXPECTED TO HAVE SERIOUS TALKS WITH BEGIN IN WASHINGTON BUT THAT THE ARABS SHOULD NOT HARBOR EXAGGERATED IDEAS ABOUT IMMEDIATE OR DRAMATIC RESULTS. BEGIN HAD TO CONSULT WITH HIS CABINET AND FOLLOW THROUGH. SHARAF AGAIN RETURNED TO HIS IDEA ABOUT A NEW FORUM FOR THE TALKS WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPANDING THEM BUT DID WIND UP BY SAYING THAT THE KEY PROBLEM FOR JORDAN WAS REALLY NOT MODALITIES BUT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUES AND RETURNED AGAIN TO THE POINT THAT JORDAN REQUIRES ASSURANCES ABOUT THE END RESULTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

20. ATHERTON MADE CLEAR THAT WHILE WE WERE NOT ASKING FOR SPECIFICS NOW IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF ASSURANCES JORDAN HAD IN MIND. IT WAS NOT REALISTIC TO ASSUME THAT A DECLARATION OF ASSURANCES WHICH RESOLVED ALL THE KEY PROBLEMS IN ADVANCE COULD BE ACHIEVED. THE U.S. WAS DEEPLY COMMITTED

TO THE PRESENT PEACE PROCESS AND CHANGE COULD COME
ALSO AS A RESULT OF ISRAELI INTERNAL PRESSURE.
BUT WHAT JORDAN WAS ASKING FOR--TOTAL WITHDRAWAL
AND UNLIMITED SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS--
WAS JUST NOT POSSIBLE. WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE
NEGOTIATIONS IN GOOD FAITH LINKED WITH THE PRINCIPLE
OF WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS AND PALESTINIAN PARTICIPA-
TION IN DETERMINING THEIR OWN FUTURE. WOULD JORDAN
JOIN TALKS IN DETERMINING THEIR OWN FUTURE. WOULD JORDAN
JOIN TALKS ON THE BASIS OF SUCH ASSURANCES OR WOULD
MORE SPECIFIC ASSURANCES BE REQUIRED TO GET STARTED?
SHARAF DID NOT ANSWER IN SPECIFIC TERMS SAYING
THAT SUCH ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE USEFUL WITHOUT
INDICATING THEY WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO GET JORDAN
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21. AT THIS POINT CROWN PRINCE HASSAN TELEPHONED
INTERRUPTING THE MEETING ASKING TO SEE ATHERTON.
THERE WAS A BRIEF DISCUSSION BEFORE THE MEETING ENDED OF WHAT
ATHERTON WOULD SAY TO THE PRESS AND OF THE
POSSIBILITY OF MEETING AGAIN WITH SHARAF AFTER ATHERTON'S
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CROWN PRINCE AND THE KING. PICKERING
UNQUOTE VANCE

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